

FALL 2023

# CENTRAL

CENTRAL COLLEGE

CIVITAS

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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BEST. WEEKEND. EVER!



# 4 CRITICAL YEARS

STORY BY: MARK PUTNAM, CENTRAL COLLEGE PRESIDENT



For those who have enjoyed long careers in higher education, there are a few seminal works offered by noted authors who shaped our thinking over decades. Among these was Alexander (Sandy) Astin. He was a prolific researcher, writer and educator, who notably served as the founding director of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, among other prestigious research appointments. His portfolio of work was immense. The book that had the most important influence on me as a young administrator was “Four Critical Years: Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes and Knowledge.”

The college years for traditional-aged students come at a key moment in the stages of human development. Those 18- to 22-year-olds reach a point where the cognitive and affective aspects of personal development explode as the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood unfolds. Though the practices of postsecondary education have evolved over the centuries, the overall experience of facilitating a process of self-discovery and maturity remains the bedrock of learning.

In this context, everything belongs. Though the classroom, studio and lab are the most common venues in education,

learning abounds in many other spaces like residence halls, coffee shops, lounges, courts and fields of competition and concert halls. The list of learning spaces also has moved to the virtual world with online access to information and collaboration. The list seems endless and for good reason — learning knows no boundaries.

The task for those of us who seek to facilitate this process is to understand the learner. The spaces and processes are important, but secondary to understanding how learning occurs. For educators, the most fundamental question is, “Who is the learner and what does the learner need to learn?” Everything else flows from this.

We witness too often today a more transactional approach to learning. It’s a reductionistic view that emphasizes task completion following a checklist. It is the pursuit of credentials with the least amount of effort possible and with the least cost. The disappointment expressed by employers about the readiness of the workforce they are receiving is not about the basic entry-level technical competencies, it’s about the capacity for these new hires to advance. Attrition rates are high; life and personal skills are low.

Central College stands in contrast to this broader pattern. Employers who receive our graduates tell us consistently our alumni are different. To be sure, our graduates are technically competent and have the essential entry-level skills. But more importantly, they are people who think beyond the assigned task to the downstream impacts of their work and the connections that exist to other aspects of the organization. They contribute to the success of others. They recognize patterns.

Astin taught us the developmental dimensions of the college experience are foundational to learning and professional promise. What students believe about themselves, others and the world matters. The attitudes they develop influence the kind of student they will be, but also the kind of employee, manager and leader they will become through time. This is why these four critical years really matter. Our shared task is to sustain an experience in which everything belongs to learning. ■

CENTRAL COLLEGE  
**CIVITAS**  
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2023 | ISSUE 2

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limiting how far you'll go.



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641-628-5154



Civitas is published by the Central communications office for alumni, parents and friends of Central College. For information on the Civitas mission, visit [civitas.central.edu](http://civitas.central.edu).

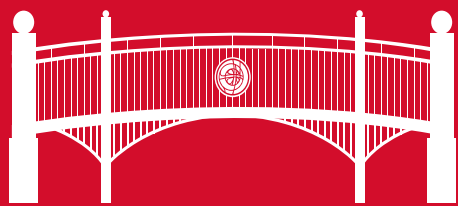
Civitas (USPS 096-840) is published three times a year by Central College, 812 University St., Pella, IA 50219-1999. Periodicals postage paid at Pella, Iowa, and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes (PS 3579) to Civitas, 812 University St., Pella, IA 50219-1999. Address changes also may be sent to [alumni@central.edu](mailto:alumni@central.edu).



10% Post-Consumer Fiber

Production notes: Civitas is printed with a vegetable-based ink by Christian Edwards, Des Moines, Iowa



# AROUND THE POND



Pictured are the new members of Central's Board of Trustees.  
Front Row: **Shannan Mattiace '90**, **Kara Kohler Hoogensen '96**, **Lori Humphrey Fegley '80** and **Kelly Vielmo '99**. Second Row: **Dave Smith** and **Marc Poortinga '98**.

## ▲ NEW BOARD MEMBERS WELCOMED

Central announced the addition of six new Board of Trustees and recognized three board members who earned trustee emeriti status. Joining the Central board are **Lori Humphrey Fegley '80**, **Kara Kohler Hoogensen '96**, **Shannan Mattiace '90**, **Marc Poortinga '98**, **Dave Smith** and **Kelly Vielmo '99**.

Trustee emeriti recognition was given to **Shalya From**, **Sophie Mathonnet-VanderWell** and **Bill Rankin '69**.



## ▲ CENTRAL WINS PORTION OF \$20M RESEARCH GRANT

Central joins Iowa's Board of Regents and another institution to launch Chemurgy 2.0 — the shorthand designation of a major initiative that positions Iowa as a national leader in biomanufacturing. "Building Capacity Across Iowa to Meet Human Needs from Things That Grow" was recently announced as one of six new projects by the National Science Foundation.

Central's principal investigator, **Jay Wackerly**, associate professor of chemistry, along with faculty and student researchers will work to synthesize value-added monomers and create polymers from inexpensive agricultural feedstocks like corn and soybeans. The result will provide access to a vast array of plastics for a wide range of uses.



## ▲ FACULTY EXPLORE NEW INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Central faculty completed international travel over the summer with funding from a U.S. Department of State grant. Four interdisciplinary teams of faculty explored different countries with the goal of developing a sustainable structure for faculty-led study abroad offerings that appeal to a diverse student body. Teams went to Chile (pictured above), Greece, Iceland and Trinidad and Tobago.

Central plans to roll out additional faculty-led off-campus experiences in the 2023-24 academic year.



## ▲ AARON ROERDINK NAMED ASSOCIATE DEAN OF LEARNING ENRICHMENT

**Aaron Roerdink '97** was named the inaugural associate dean of learning enrichment and associate professor-in-residence of chemistry at Central. He transitioned to Central from Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, where he chaired the department of chemistry and biochemistry.

He is responsible for the development and implementation of a strategy for summer academic programs, including undergraduate research, internships, workshops and courses. In his role, he will develop and implement a strategic direction for Geisler Library to serve new generations of students.

To read full articles and other news, go to Central's news site at [central.edu/news](http://central.edu/news).



## TOP SCHOLARS NAMED

In July, Central announced the incoming full-tuition scholars for the Class of 2027.

- + **Ernest Alvarez Chedzoy**, Kerrville, Texas, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Aniya Coleman**, Kansas City, Missouri, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Gavin Jablonski**, Marshalltown, Iowa, recipient of the P.H. Kuyper Scholarship
- + **Ava Parkins**, Monmouth, Illinois, recipient of the Pella Corporation Engineering Scholarship
- + **Peyton Ritzert**, Pella, Iowa, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Elyse Shaw**, Indianola, Iowa, recipient of the Joan Kuyper Farver Scholarship
- + **Hayden Sinclair**, Ames, Iowa, recipient of the Thomas Ross Smith Scholarship
- + **Alex Slaymaker**, Geneseo, Illinois, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **William Wadsley**, Ames, Iowa, recipient of the H.S. Kuyper Scholarship

In addition to these top scholarships, Central offers many other scholarships to students each year. For the second year in a row, every new incoming student will receive a Journey Scholarship. All scholarships are made possible by the generosity of donors.



### ◀ BEATRIZ MATE-KODJO RECEIVES CAMPUS COMPACT ALUMNI LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Iowa and Minnesota Campus Compact selected **Beatriz Mate-Kodjo '11** as the 2023 Engaged Campus Award for Alumni Leadership award recipient.

Mate-Kodjo is a civil rights attorney at BMK Law Firm in Pella, Iowa. She primarily practices in employment and education discrimination. Mate-Kodjo volunteers with Central's National Advisory Council, where she brings valuable knowledge and experience. She supports current students who are leading social justice initiatives and served as a Women's Leadership Conference panelist in the fall. Students appreciate her energy and enthusiasm as a bilingual mentor who wants to improve equity and diversity in Iowa.



### ▲ CENTRAL RELEASES COLLECTION OF STUDENT CREATIVITY

The new "Synaptic" features creative student work from across the liberal arts curriculum from the 2022-23 academic year. Synaptic, edited by **Emma Carlson '23**, **Mattie Francis '23** and **Sydney Lowe '24**, is a modern reboot of "The Writing Anthology."

Each year, the John Allen Award recognizes a student-written piece that the selection panel deems to have superior rhetorical competence, high levels of readability, originality and insight. **Fynn Wadsworth '25** received this honor for his work "Robert Henri and the Ideal Woman: An Analysis of Ballet Girl in White."

### ◀ ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERS RETIRE

Central celebrated the careers of two longstanding administrators who retired after the 2022-23 academic year —

**Marguerite "Peggy" Fitch**, *left* and **Carol Williamson**, *right*. Williamson retired from the role of vice president for student development and dean of students, after 23 years of service to Central. Fitch served as a professor of psychology and Title IX coordinator and equity officer. She also led the Building a Culture of Inclusion initiative.

## WRITE US!

Civitas welcomes letters and emails from readers concerning the contents of the magazine or issues relating to Central College. Please include the author's name, city and state; anonymous communications will be discarded. Letters selected for publication may be edited for length, content, clarity and style. Address letters to Civitas, Central Communications, Central College, 812 University St., Pella, Iowa 50219 or email **Melody VanderLeest**, Civitas assistant editor, at [vanderleestm@central.edu](mailto:vanderleestm@central.edu).

To read full articles and other news, go to Central's news site at [central.edu/news](http://central.edu/news).

# TEACHERS OF THE GAME

Central faculty members in coaching ranks highlight athletics' role in educational process.

STORY BY:  
LARRY HAPPEL '81



Central faculty member **Keith Jones**, Mark and Kay De Cook Endowed Chair in Character and Leadership Development and professor of psychology, values the opportunity that serving as a part-time assistant softball coach provides to connect with students in new ways.

**Keith Jones** heard himself say yes before he'd even processed the question.

He was at a Central College staff picnic in 2013 with **George Wares '76**, Central's head women's softball coach and lecturer of kinesiology, and still finishing his watermelon when Wares, partly joking but mostly serious, asked Jones if he'd like to be an assistant coach. Jones was simultaneously startled and thrilled that the winningest coach in NCAA Division III softball history was offering him a chance to be on the playing field in a college sport — the secret dream of millions of American sports fans.

But Jones is the Mark and Kay De Cook Endowed Chair in Character and Leadership Development and professor of psychology, not a softball coach. And his coaching background was largely limited to helping with a few of his kids' youth sports teams.

## FROM ROE (CENTER) TO WHOA

"I immediately said yes," Jones says. "But then my mind went to, 'Wait, what? Really, why me? I have zero experience coaching collegiate sports, I haven't coached women, I haven't coached softball.' So, George and I met later to work through this. He said, 'We

think you can be good, and we can teach you about Central softball.'

"To me, it was a sense of what did they see that I don't get? But then after we talked, I was thinking, OK, they see something. They know things that I don't. I mean, clearly, they're incredibly successful. And so I thought, 'OK, let's see if it clicks.'

"So, then I went to a handful of fall practices just to see what this would be like. And I thought, 'Why would I not want to be part of that?'"

While **Russ Goodman**, professor of mathematics and assistant women's soccer





Professor of Mathematics **Russ Goodman** finds coaching Central's women's soccer goalkeepers requires teaching the same kind of problem-solving skills his math students use.

coach, had a longtime interest in soccer; his previous coaching experience was even less extensive than Jones's. He was still new at Central in 2002 when he and his wife Linda met then-coach **Cory Ann Ellis**, who was in her first season and in need of help. Suddenly, Goodman found himself on the practice field.

"I did a little bit with the goalkeepers," he said. "I would just shoot at them; I didn't know what I was doing."

**Rick Burns**, a veteran collegiate head coach, took over in 2004 and pushed Goodman to get formal training through the United Soccer Coaches goalkeeper coaching licensing program. He was hooked.

"I really enjoyed how technical it was, how precise it was and just how special it was to kind of have that goalkeeper team within the team," he said. "It felt pretty impactful for me."

## THE COMEBACK

It was once common for Division III coaches to come from the ranks of faculty. In the 1970s and 1980s, **Norman "Doc" Ryerson**, former education faculty member, and **Michael Schrier**, emeritus associate professor of history, built Central dynasties in men's golf and men's tennis, respectively. It was normal to see a basket of optic yellow tennis balls parked behind Schrier's office door on the ground floor of Geisler Library or a stack of scorecards piled on Ryerson's second-floor office desk.

The dual roles were partly a matter of fiscal prudence but also reflected the college's philosophical approach. The original Division III philosophy authored by the late **Kenneth Weller**, Central president emeritus, articulated the notion that college athletics are not extracurricular but co-curricular, a part of a well-rounded education, not an isolated activity.

As recruiting and administrative responsibilities grew, more and more Division III schools started hiring full-time coaches, a trend Weller bemoaned; although at Central, some coaches still provide instruction in the kinesiology department.

Weller believed to his core that athletes who were diligent students became better athletes, and students who were committed to developing as athletes became better students. He also saw mutual benefits for faculty and coaches and celebrated those with dual roles, like Jones and Goodman.

Women's Soccer Coach **Mike Kobylinski** says the benefits for his players of having a faculty member on staff are obvious.

"I think it's been massive for our program," he says. "It's no coincidence that our team GPA has been so high. Russ talks to a lot of players (about classes) on road trips and is with them during study times, so that's been fantastic."

Goodman also alerts Kobylinski to stressful periods on the academic calendar.

"He does that every year," Kobylinski says. "Like when it's finals time or just when they

## MAXIMIZING PERFORMANCE, PROTECTING HEALTH THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Generous support from donors is allowing Central College to enhance both academic opportunities as well as athletics performance through the use of Catapult GPS accelerometers.

The tiny devices are positioned in a small vest worn between an athlete's shoulder blades and track key performance indicators during competition and practices, providing insights into the stresses that athletes are experiencing. Initially tested by the women's soccer team, the devices are now extensively used by the football team.

"It gives us a comprehensive picture of athlete wellness," says **Katelin Valster**, assistant professor of kinesiology. "And then we can do some specific monitoring on individual athletes or position groups to inform training and understand any of the stresses that the body is going through."

**Jeff McMartin '90**, head football coach, and **Kyle Johnson '02**, strength and conditioning coordinator and fitness center director, rely on the data to guard against overtraining an athlete while determining optimum conditioning levels.

"You believe your eyes, but it gives you some data that can alert you before you can see someone trail off and get overtrained," Johnson shares.

Johnson combines the reports with the data his staff receives from wellness surveys the players complete daily on their phones that record perceived exertion levels.

The student research opportunities are robust as well.

"It's kind of three-fold," Valster says. "The projects are driven by students that are interested. We get to collaborate with the athletics department and then through it, we have a unique connection to alumni, not only through their financial support but as our students end up connecting with alumni that are in the field at Division I schools or wherever, and how they use Catapult."

Not every athlete is monitored so the data provides a generalized picture. Central's staff found the information so beneficial that additional donor support was solicited and the college now has 40 devices.

"I was talking to a grad recently who is at a (mid-level Division I) school, and he said they only had 10," Valster shares. "And when I told him we had 40, he was blown away."

Given its potential within academics and athletics, all sides are interested in seeing where this technology and research can take us.

have heavy loads, he puts gentle reminders in my ear, and we might back (practice) down a little bit or talk with the captains about how we can adjust things.”

### THAT’S THE GOAL

Goodman found a fascinating symmetry in his academic and athletics teaching.

“I think coaching goalkeeping goes really well with the notion of problem-solving, math and thinking logically — especially when it’s 90 degrees out, you’re tired, it’s the 90th minute of the game and you have to be thinking logically with a level head to solve problems,” Goodman says. “That’s what soccer is all about.”

“It sounds kind of simple to say that, but training and knowing, ‘OK, so my defender’s here, should I come out or maybe not? Where’s the attacker? Is she looking down at the ball or is she looking up directly at me? Is she looking for a teammate to pass to? Do I stay back because her head is up and she’s looking to pass?’ Understanding what the cues are and processing that quickly is all problem-solving.”

### BUILDING BRIDGES

Goodman, who takes pride in the Central women’s soccer team’s 11 consecutive USC Team Academic Awards, also said that his coaching work helps tear down any silos that might exist on either part of the campus.

“At any institution, that dynamic and tension between academics and athletics is always there, right?” he says. “I try to be a good liaison in both directions.”

“When coaches are talking about, ‘We should do x, y or z,’ or ‘This is how things should be,’ I’ll occasionally offer a perspective for how the academic dean typically feels or faculty typically feel. And vice versa when we’re in a faculty meeting or I’m talking to colleagues, I’ll chime in, either confirming or challenging some of the assumptions that my colleagues may make. There are so many coaches, especially at Central, who care very deeply for their athletes and for them to be even better students than they are athletes.”

“I enjoy that position of living with one foot in each world because I’m really committed to both sides of it,” Goodman adds.

### CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

But what Jones and Goodman value most is the ability to connect with students in a new way, as well as the eye-opening perspectives they quickly gain. Jones recalls his first team workouts.

“They had 5:30 a.m. practices and it was about three days in when I had a different appreciation for the student-athlete experience,” Jones admits. “Because now I’m thinking, ‘OK, I know what you’re going through.’”

“For me, that connection was transformative in a way as a teacher because I always think that the better I know students, the more effective I am teaching them. And they know me more as a person, rather than just someone teaching a class, so we can create this educational and learning context.”

Likewise, Goodman has learned about scrambling to get to practice following a late-afternoon class, and the dexterity required to pull off a clothing change in a parked car. He’s noticed students’ perceptions of him change when they learn he coaches.

“I think (coaching) gives me a little bit of credibility with our students because so many of them are student-athletes and they think ‘Oh, here’s a guy who knows what I’m going through, he’s got to have the same kind of time management that I do,’” Goodman says. “I think that helps me maybe build better relationships with some of the students.”

### THE MORE YOU KNOW

Those relationships are part of the Central ethos.

“That’s one of the great things about Central,” Jones says. “We’ve had consultants come in and tell us, ‘Hey, a root word for you at Central is empathy.’ And when we have shared experiences, empathy is easier to have. It’s easier for me to appreciate someone the more I know them.”

Jones sees similarities in the methods used by great professors and those that have made Wares successful for nearly four decades.

“One of the first things is simultaneously being able to know what it takes to basically operate at a championship level and then care for those people who are on the team, to care for them as people and players at the same time,” Jones shares.

“Sometimes as a professor, it’s easy to think of a student in your class just as a student in your class. But you can teach better when you realize, ‘Oh, they’re a person with this whole life. Part of it is being a student and part is being a student in my class.’ And with players, it’s a similar way of thinking. ‘Oh, yeah, they’re a player who happens to be a student who is a person



Central women’s soccer players, like forward **Hailey Hunter ’24** (above), have easy access to professor/coach **Russ Goodman** as an academic resource.





For players like outfielder **Megan Doty '23**, the Central softball field is a classroom, according to Psychology Professor **Keith Jones**.

with all these other attributes.' And so as you get to know people and develop those relationships, that allows you to hold yourself accountable and hold others accountable because we've got a relationship where we know each other and you can do that.

"It's developing relationships, developing trust and then having the techniques and the knowledge of what it takes to operate at that high level."

### **BEST. JOB. EVER.**

**Ed Willis**, professor emeritus of psychology, is a long time colleague and mentor for Jones. He served as a volunteer assistant coach with Central's 1974 Division III champion football squad.

"One of the things Ed mentioned to me

when he learned I was going to do this was, you're going to work incredibly hard, but it'll be one of the best experiences of your life here," Jones recalls. "It will change how you teach because you're not going to teach students anymore, you're going to teach people."

That personalized teaching approach, without regard to subject matter or setting, has long been part of the magic of the Central experience. It's what Jones observed from Willis.

"Somebody once said to him, 'Oh, Ed, I didn't know you work at the college,'" Jones shares. "And Ed said that he was a professor there. The person replied, 'Oh, what do you teach?' Ed said, '18- to 22-year-olds.'" ■

## **ATHLETICS UPDATES**

**ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA®:** Central had a record six athletes gain College Sports Communicators Academic All-America® honors during 2022-23. Joining the list in the winter and spring were wrestler **Gage Linahon '24**, women's golfer/triathlete **Thea Lunning '23** and men's and women's track and field and cross country runners **Megan Johnson '24**, **Noah Jorgenson '24** and **Caroline McMartin '24**.

**BASEBALL:** Central was 15-24 but improved its American Rivers mark to 8-16 and narrowly missed the conference tournament, placing seventh. Right fielder **Colton DeRocher '24** was an ABCA all-region second-team pick after hitting .380 with eight homers and 38 doubles. Following the season, assistant **Adam Carey '19** was named the program's new head coach.

**MEN'S GOLF:** **Harold Dobernecker '24** finished fifth at the American Rivers tournament, gaining all-conference honors for the third time. The Dutch placed third overall.

**SOFTBALL:** Central made a record 31st NCAA tournament appearance. The Dutch were 33-11 overall and 11-5 in conference play, finishing 23rd in the final NFCA Division III rankings. Center fielder **Emma Johnson '23** was a first-team all-region pick while second baseman **Haley Bach '25** was a second-team choice. Pitcher **Sydni Huisman '23** and third baseman **Frannie Burnett '24** were third-team picks.

**MEN'S TENNIS:** **Trey Melvin '23** and **Nick Scott '24** gained all-conference distinction. The Dutch finished 12-11, coming in third in the conference at 6-2.

**MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:** Four Central athletes received All-America honors. **Caroline McMartin '24** was third in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase at the NCAA Division III in Rochester, New York, while **Megan Johnson '24** was seventh. **Caleb Silver '23** was eighth in the men's steeplechase, **Noah Jorgenson '24** was eighth in the 800 and **Brody Klein '24** was fifth in the decathlon. The women tied for 31st overall and the men tied for 40th. They were third and fifth, respectively in the American Rivers meet.

For an up-to-date schedule of all sports, visit [athletics.central.edu/calendar](https://athletics.central.edu/calendar).

# BUILDING BLOCKS

## OF A CENTRAL EDUCATION

Dynamic learning opportunities can be found in classrooms across Central College's campus.

STORY BY:  
**ERIN KAMP**

ARTWORK BY:  
**MELODY VANDERLEEST**

PHOTOS BY:  
**DUSTIN DAWSON AND  
KAYLA LINDQUIST '25**







Students in Principles of Microeconomics with **Tuan Nguyen**, assistant professor of economics, demonstrated the concept of diminishing marginal product of labor through a LEGO® activity in Spring 2023.

A Central College education goes beyond lectures, memorization and exams. Students enter classrooms with open minds, and graduates begin careers with a practical understanding of their field. Experiential learning can be observed campus-wide due to the dedication of professors who enter their classrooms each day prepared to create valuable learning experiences for students. Central faculty are more than mentors: They're lifelong students.

**Maggie Fisher Schlerman '02**, associate professor of accounting, models Central's aptitude to explore new methods of teaching. Her work has established a foundation for other faculty members to build upon.

### THE MISSING PIECE

Schlerman collaborated with members of the Economics/Accounting/Management Department, including **Crystal Bruntz**, lecturer of accounting; **Graham Lemke**, Donald T. Butler Endowed Chair and professor of finance; **Tuan Nguyen**, assistant professor of economics; **George Nwaogu**, associate professor of economics; and **Julie Summers**, lecturer of management and marketing. These faculty created activities to demonstrate business concepts using LEGO® blocks.

It started with a need for a hands-on activity for prospective students visiting during group visit days. Campus visits are the perfect moment for interactive activities that show prospective students what learning looks like in Central's classrooms, and how theories can go beyond lectures.

"It's hard to get a good discussion going if students don't know the other students at the table," Schlerman says. "If you can give students a shared common task, that's one way to build trust. It's a nice hands-on activity that can be a conversation starter."

After a successful kickoff of the experiment at a visit day, Schlerman's LEGO® idea grew. She brought her idea to her colleagues, and EAM faculty members began determining activities that could demonstrate theories while providing a collaborative and competitive experience for students.

### IT JUST CLICKS

As their ideas expanded, the need for additional equipment grew with it. The Moore Family Foundation funded a custom order from LEGO®, obtaining new blocks in the right sizes and the right colors (red and white, of course). Blocks in hand, the faculty members met over the summer to start trying new experiments.

"It did take some trial and error," Schlerman admits. "Sometimes you have to find people who haven't done the activity before. I've even tried it out on my family!"

Because of the variety of audiences, faculty members must be prepared to adapt their experiments based on who's involved.

"Part of the reason why the activity goes so well now is because we anticipated a lot of potential problems with the experiment," Nguyen adds. "We've tweaked it to the point where we anticipate that any problems would be minimal."

Nguyen's LEGO® activity is now an established piece of his Principles of Microeconomics class to demonstrate diminishing marginal product of labor. The activity is now a highlight for students in his class, and he sees a stronger understanding of the concept.

"Part of my job is to balance how much theoretical exposure they have before the activity and how that corresponds to the level of rigor I do for these experiments," Nguyen says. "Economics can be a very theoretical field. A lot of the time, we tell students what could potentially happen, but they don't get to verify it. But if you learn something and you get to observe that it really works, it resonates with you more."



**Sarah Van Waardhuizen**, associate professor of music, and **Amelia Brown '25** present their original children's book, "Together We'll Be" at the Undergraduate Research presentations.

The feedback from students affirms the change in material presentation. Not only are they learning about core concepts in their class, but they're excited about how they're learning.

"I think it's helpful to break up the monotony of a lecture. Students like it because it gives them a different aspect of exposure to the material," Nguyen explains.

### **BUILD IT YOURSELF**

Schlerman and Nguyen aren't the only professors bringing LEGO® bricks to their classrooms. Most EAM faculty members use the LEGO® as learning tools.

"As students progress through their business management degree, they get bits and pieces of this activity that interconnect classes together," Nguyen says. "It gives them an idea about how they can take a concept, see it in action and apply it to the real world."

The foundation these professors have built continues to bridge opportunities throughout students' education. Schlerman, Nguyen, Bruntz, Lemke, Nwaogu and Summers led an interactive presentation at Central's Endowed Chairs' Conference in Fall 2022, inviting Central faculty to use LEGO® bricks in classrooms across campus.

"Learning science points to the fact that students will remember this better when they're using their muscle memory and they're more actively engaged with the content this way," Schlerman says. "Activities like these are likely to support students learning complicated theories and support learning that will benefit students beyond an exam."

### **A HIGH NOTE**

Hands-on learning can go beyond classroom activities and extend into a masterpiece.

**Sarah Van Waardhuizen**, associate professor of music, leads a creative approach to music education. In Elementary Music Methods, Van Waardhuizen asks students to create a children's book, complete with an original story, a song and illustrations.

"Children's books are usually very rhythmic and pattern based. That's music. It organically works very well together," Van Waardhuizen says. "What many children's books are missing is an actual song. I always just make one up and sing it. For years now, I thought, if I ever write a children's book, it has to have music."





Students in Elementary Music Methods wrote and illustrated original children's books. These stories are written by **Sarah Van Waardhuizen**, associate professor of music, **Abbi Eicher '24** and **Quinci Cottrell '24**. **Amelia Brown '25**, **Gunner Hutton '25** and **Fynn Wadsworth '25** illustrated.

Now, in the context of this course, Van Waardhuizen has found a reason to create a children's book her way.

This isn't the first time Van Waardhuizen is teaching this class, but it is a new approach.

"Students want relevancy," Van Waardhuizen says. "They can Google and find a lot of information. In my classes, I'm trying to create assignments that are not Googleable."

While students still learn about crucial moments in history, it's presented differently. Van Waardhuizen condenses lectures so the class focus can be on creativity and innovation.

Van Waardhuizen launched her idea in Spring 2023 with two future music educators. The course is designed for music education majors, and Van Waardhuizen tasked those students with creating a children's book complete with a moral and an original song. The remaining step was illustrating each book. With support from **Mat Kelly**, professor of art, Van Waardhuizen connected with three artists who could help.

"Each student has their own book and their own artist that they collaborated with," Van Waardhuizen explains. "They had to meet with them and discuss how they wanted to portray things. The artists had a lot of liberty as well."

#### WRITTEN BY ...

Van Waardhuizen knew that for the first iteration of this project, it was important for her to participate. She completed homework, collaborated with an artist and created a book along with her class. Her involvement helps her understand how to better instruct students and adapt the project to improve the learning process and final results.

"All of our creative processes have been different, and yet, we came to the same conclusion," Van Waardhuizen says. "I study autonomy and supportive teaching and learning. Part of that is having autonomy to be creative. I didn't want to stifle that. I do have some parameters, but I tried to give some leeway."

This project creates a creative opportunity to help Van Waardhuizen approach her work feeling refreshed.

"Sometimes in your job or when working creatively, you need rejuvenation," Van Waardhuizen says. "This project has given that to me. It's been really fun personally, and I love seeing the students get excited about it."

#### ENCORE

The partnership between music educators and artists created a beautiful opportunity

for students to learn about different mediums of storytelling.

"The collaboration process between the art program and music program has been really exciting to see come to fruition," Van Waardhuizen says. "I want my students to feel empowered that they can create and make a difference with their words."

It's opened the door for similar partnerships across campus. From communication studies majors to psychology students, Van Waardhuizen knows there are a number of faculty who would be interested in participating.

Trust between student and professor makes projects like these possible. Van Waardhuizen is thankful that she had the opportunity to try something new and produce a story meaningful to her.

"Sometimes if you have an idea, you just have to throw it out there, see what happens and then pick up the pieces for the next time. I feel like we've done that," Van Waardhuizen says. "And the students went along with it, which is so fun."

**You can purchase copies of the children's books written and illustrated by Central students at [lulu.com](https://lulu.com). ■**

Oh, places  
the places  
you'll  
go...

WITH A  
CENTRAL  
EDUCATION AND  
THE CENTRAL  
NETWORK!

Central College's network helps students and alumni  
realize their dreams and opportunities.

STORY BY: JEANETTE BUDDING  
PHOTOS BY: CJ BONIFER





During the Fall 2023 Internship Fair, **Trong Bao '23** stopped at Pella Corporation's display, where he met **Josh Prokupek '18**. This introduction led Bao to a job at one of Pella Corporation's businesses.

**Trong Bao**, a December 2022 Central College graduate, changed his job prospect outlook when he had a not-so-chance meeting at the Central Career Fair with **Josh Prokupek '18**.

The Central alum opened a door for Bao, who graduated with a degree in computer science and a minor in mathematics.

He met Prokupek along with four other Pella Corporation team members at their table during the career fair on Peace Mall. More than 30 companies attended the annual Central Career Fair hosted by the Career Development and Civic Engagement Office.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"Trong spoke about his work experience and internship at PPI, Inc.," Prokupek says. "He shared how he asked his managers to do more and learn new areas. These are telltale signs of skills that are hard to coach or teach someone. Being willing to learn and asking for more work shows great drive. Additionally, Trong had experience that was very valuable."

Prokupek remembers taking notes on Bao's resume and writing "hire this kid" on the side. After the career fair, he sent an email to a Pella Corporation human resources representative for IT saying he'd had "a great conversation with a student

at the career fair. I was blown away by his experience and desire to learn. He is in web development and app development. I really think we should scoop him up."

Prokupek admits the timing was good.

"I was shifting from a remote position at Custom Window Systems, the Florida-based company that Pella Corporation acquired, back to the corporate office in Pella," Prokupek said. "I talked to my CWS manager at that time, Daniel Maxwell, who had a position opening at CWS. He asked if I thought Trong would be a good fit. I said, 'Absolutely.'"

### CONNECTING CONNECTIONS

Prokupek did his research, too. He learned Bao had the same academic advisor at Central, **Stephen Fyfe '87**, professor of computer science.

"I called Professor Fyfe to get his impressions of Bao. I was sticking my neck out for this student and wanted to make sure it was a good decision," Prokupek laughs. "I can't say I was surprised, but sure enough, he told me Trong was a great student."

In his response, Fyfe shared an example of Bao's eagerness to learn. Due to there not being enough students for a course, Fyfe had to drop a class. Bao still wanted to learn the content, so he approached Fyfe. The

two met one-on-one weekly to complete the course. Fyfe assured Prokupek that Bao has a great attitude and desire to learn. He was impressed with Trong's enthusiasm and willingness to go the extra mile to learn the material. This spoke volumes about his dedication and commitment, making him an ideal candidate for any team.

"It was the impression that he made," Prokupek says. "I appreciated the character validation from Professor Fyfe. Plus, I knew he was graduating in December. I know how it feels when an applicant is waiting for job offer decisions. It can be tough at that age. I just wanted to make sure that Trong felt heard and respected. And I didn't want to lose him to another company."

Prokupek added that Central does a good job of imparting skills like adaptability, resiliency, social skills and soft skills like communication. Learning new processes, talking to people and socializing are hard skills to coach at the corporate level.

Bao submitted dozens of job applications. He landed six interviews and received two job offers by the time he graduated. Both offers were from companies that attended Central's Career Fair in Fall 2022. The connections built during the Career Fair made all the difference for Bao.



Pella Corporation employees **Josh Prokupek '18**, left, and **Trong Bao '23**, right, connected through Central's Career Development and Civic Engagement program.

So, the Pella Corporation team expedited the process and Bao secured a job before graduating in December.

Since joining Pella Corporation's family of businesses, Bao has met with Prokupek once a week as an informal mentor. They talk about technical things for the job but also topics a new graduate doesn't know. They discuss navigating corporate life, professional growth and personal life.

Bao also remembers Prokupek as being a nice guy from Central. "He reached out to me and cared about how I was doing during the job search. He asked me about my interviewing process and how my applications were going."

Having a Central alum as a mentor is valuable for recent graduates in the workplace.

"Josh is a great mentor because of his experiences," Bao says. "It helps to talk with someone who has worked in different areas within my field."

## HARD WORK MAKES THE GAINS

Bao's career journey was longer than that of most Central alumni. He moved to West Des Moines, Iowa, from Vietnam when he was 15 years old. He graduated from Valley High School but faced a financial challenge with state universities.

As an international student, the cost to attend is three times as expensive as in-state tuition. He attended Des Moines Area Community College for two years for general education requirements. This led to a job at DMACC and a gap year while Bao saved for his bachelor's degree.

"I was interested in playing video games and thought I'd go into computer science to make games," Bao laughs. As it turns out, making games is totally different thing than playing games. "It's really hard," he says.

The job at DMACC was more of a tech support position. Bao realized that was not where he wanted his career to go. He felt it was a great way to begin refining his career path and get something on his résumé.

## FOREVER DUTCH®

Your Central College experience doesn't end with you crossing the stage to receive your diploma. You're here for four years but you're an alum for life!

If you're hungry for even more ways to engage with Central, **Mary Benedict**, director of engagement has a whole list of ideas on how to best stay connected with the college:

**+ Alumni Updates:** Let us know when you move, have children, get married, start a new job and more. We want to be sure our records are accurate, you know what's going on at Central through newsletters and the magazine and we're talking to you the way you prefer.

**+ Alumni Events:** It's never too late to attend your first alumni event! We have a diverse range of events we host throughout the year and we're always open to new ideas.

**+ Central RED:** Join Central's lifelong learning program to meet new people, learn exciting things and eat great food!

**+ Come See Us:** Let us know when you're in town — no matter if it's Tulip Time or a random day of the week! Stop by the Advancement Office in Central Hall to say hi, get your photo taken, your alumni gift, catch up and take a tour of campus.

**+ Homecoming:** Don't wait for your reunion to attend Homecoming. It's one of the biggest, most fun events of the year! No matter your age, you'll have a great time.

**+ Host An Alumni Event:** Let us know if you're interested in hosting an event in your area. Our team can help you plan and get communication out. It's a great way to meet new people and connect with fellow Central family members.

**+ Legacy Program:** Let us know about your children and we'll send them a birthday gift on milestone years.

**+ Make A Gift:** Our donors open doors by making a Central education and all the opportunities available to our students affordable. No gift is too small — it all adds up and has a direct impact on Central students!

**+ Refer A Student:** Help us recruit the newest members of the Central family and refer them to Central!

**+ Speak To A Class:** Let us know if you'd be willing to speak to a class and we'll connect you with faculty members.

**+ Reconnect:** We love bringing people together. Let us help you get in touch with friends with whom you may have lost contact.

**+ Volunteer:** We're always looking for volunteers whether it's greeting for Move-In Day, sitting on a panel for visit days, connecting with prospective students, current students and young alumni or serving as a co-chair for your reunion.

To volunteer or get more information on how to get involved, contact the alumni engagement team at [alumni@central.edu](mailto:alumni@central.edu).



Bao thought he was good at math but didn't know what to do with a math major. He didn't want to pursue a Ph.D. or teach.

### A HELPING HAND

This is where Central's Career Development and Civic Engagement team steps in to support students. They provide individualized one-on-one career coaching as well as workshops and events.

"I give credit to Trong because he jumped in and reached out to us," says **Jess Klyn de Novelo '05**, associate dean for career development and civic engagement. "He struggled with employment opportunities and internships because he was an international student. We started with basic professional development and getting his résumé on point. Then, we worked on getting him comfortable in conversations and interviews and made sure he knew the events that our office provides for all students and alumni."

### THE CENTRAL NETWORK

"Our office works with students across their professional lifespan, during and after their journey at Central," Klyn de Novelo says. "We can engage with prospective students and parents through admission events, talking about fun things like internships and what students can do and how they get to do it. We also network and leverage alumni resources."

The team works on progressive planning with students from year one through year four. Year one and year two are more focused on exploration opportunities. The college offers workshops on purpose, passion and career exploration.

"We conduct strong interest inventories and intensive career coaching, so they understand what it means to take skills and identify opportunities," Klyn de Novelo shares.

The office coordinates partnerships with classes like Principles of Marketing where

they host a mock interview event every semester. It's a holistic approach to meeting the students where they are.

By participating in Career Kickstarter, students can complete a micro-internship. The team works with students to determine if they need an informational interview with somebody currently working in the industry, which is when they really tap into the alumni network.

In their third and fourth years, the office works with students to refine their experiences through their résumés. The team will also review a student's career exploration and internship coordination process. If students are struggling to find connections or networks, the team works in partnership with the student to identify opportunities and people in their industry. The office coordinates the for-credit internships to ensure paperwork is completed for proper credit.

### SERVING STUDENTS

Central's Career Development and Civic Engagement office offers transactional and transformational services. They take calls from alumni with internship positions open at their organizations; leverage Handshake, a job posting platform, to make connections with interested students; and use bulk text and email notifications, so all students have the same access to opportunities.

In addition to the services and events this team provides, they also monitor trends in the marketplace and work closely with students as well as alumni. The office provides career support for alumni who may be going through a job transition or have worked in one industry for several years and are ready for a change to a new industry. The team can assist alumni in making connections of applicable skills for a new position.

"The career services office is unique at Central because we have this beautiful pool of alumni who want to be engaged and want to be part of helping other alumni," Klyn de Novelo says. "When we ask for volunteers for networking dinners, career fairs and mock interviews, we get a lot of yeses from alumni. It's wonderful."

Klyn de Novelo cautions that when students connect with alumni, it doesn't mean they will automatically get a job. But it opens doors many times to a hidden job market, especially for students who are first-generation, low-income or are just having a hard time finding something.

### ALUMNI HELPING OTHERS

The alumni network is a huge benefit for students. Every year Klyn de Novelo watches students who have had a micro-internship or an internship at a company transition into full-time employment.

Prokupek is one of the many Central graduates who seamlessly transitioned from an internship into a career. He completed an internship at Pella Corporation during his junior year at Central and was offered a position in the company before graduation.

Bao took advantage of the resources available on campus. He attended professional development opportunities, networked and engaged with alumni and got an internship. He made strides in his personal development by completing many LinkedIn professional coding lessons. He worked on skills development and leveraged it on LinkedIn so people knew what he could do.

"Trong is very humble, kind and has a good work ethic. He took advantage of our workshops and skills-building opportunities on campus. He fostered alumni networks and connections while at Central which led to his success securing his first job," Klyn de Novelo says. "He had the personal drive and intelligence and used our resources to secure success. We're so proud of him."

Alumni can use the Career Development and Civic Engagement Office to connect with graduates and students for internships and employment. Alumni may also find the services valuable for their own career re-evaluation. Contact the Career Development and Civic Engagement Office, at **klynj@central.edu**.

From on-campus resources to the global network of alumni who represent diverse industries and positions, Central students have a lifetime of support and encouragement. ■

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

- + Career Kickstarter and micro-internships
- + Career and Internship Networking Fair
- + Graduate school luncheon
- + Handshake job postings
- + Internship workshop and coordination
- + Interviewing skills coaching
- + Mock interview with Principles of Marketing class
- + Networking dinner
- + One-on-one coaching
- + Personal financial workshop
- + Resume and cover letter feedback
- + Salary negotiations workshop
- + Stipends to support students during unpaid internships



## CENTRAL SCENE

PHOTO BY: CJ BONIFER

"Go Dutch!" says it all for Central College's award-winning dance team. They electrified the Central spirit for Homecoming in style. The team celebrated Central's first national title for the dance and cheer program earned at the 2023 National Dance Alliance Collegiate Cheer and Dance Competition. The dance team brought home another heavy medal with the American Rivers Dance and Cheer Invitational championship title.











# *Engaged* **TO THE CORE**

After more than 20 years, Central College faculty and administration thought it time to look into a new kind of core curriculum.

STORY BY:  
**BRITTANY CARLSON PROKUPEK '16**

ARTWORK BY:  
**MELODY VANDERLEEST**

PHOTOS BY:  
**DUSTIN DAWSON**





**Jim Zaffiro**, professor of political science, right, welcomed the Class of 2027 on the first day of classes under the new Engaged Citizenship integrated learning model to prepare students for careers and success in the future.

A new academic year brings about a great deal of excitement, new opportunities, a clean slate and so much more. This fall, Central College implemented a new Engaged Citizenship core curriculum impacting the newest members of the Central family, the Class of 2027.

The realization that the core curriculum had not been reviewed or majorly updated in 20 years and overwhelming approval from leadership brought on several years of research, discussions, planning and tweaking, all of which led to its triumphant launch.

At Central, an engaged citizen represents responsible membership in the communities to which we each belong (Central included) and has three essential features: relationships, reflection and responsibility.

### FACULTY-LED

During the period of preparation, **Jim Zaffiro**, professor of political science, was the chair of two ad hoc committees and a designated point person for the Academic Planning Committee. Zaffiro credits multiple ad hoc committees with heavy lifting as APC has many responsibilities from year to year. As many as 50 faculty volunteers played a role in this work which allowed for broad representation and overwhelming faculty buy-in.

“The whole process has been widely shared across faculty,” Zaffiro says. “The administration and senior leadership have been supportive all along, but it’s been a faculty-led endeavor.”

### TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

“Civitas I, the first-year course, revolves around common first-year experiences and the kinds of tools we can give students for college success,” Zaffiro says. Some elements of previous first-year courses like Intersections are integrated, but it’s a lot more free-standing.

“The big change here is we have a unified narrative that will carry through, but we’re also working on those basic college success and career skills in that context,” Zaffiro explains.

There are some commonalities from course to course, but faculty are approaching the course from different perspectives. “Some of the ideas focus on respectful dialogue, feeling like this is a community in



**Paulina Mena**, professor of biology and faculty fellow for diversity and inclusion, met with students on the first day of classes to discuss the three pillars of being an engaged citizen – relationships, reflection and responsibility.



**Lee Macomber**, associate professor of biology, reviewed the expectations for the Class of 2027 and how they will develop their course schedules using the Engaged Citizenship plan.



**Lori Witt**, Kenneth J. Weller Distinguished Professor of the Liberal Arts and associate professor of history, introduced students to the Engaged Citizenship core value of responsibility in college, community and the world.





**Jim Zaffiro**, professor of political science, who chaired two committees developing the new course requirements, reviewed the expectations for students in his section of Civitas I, the course all first-year students take at Central.

which you not only belong but also in which you want to belong and with those rights come responsibilities.”

Elements of the new core include Civitas I and II courses as well as courses in citizenship, written and oral communication, exploration and language. This new model has fewer requirements than the previous core and provides students with flexibility to do more, like dive deeper within their major. They can also pick up an additional major or minor, go outside their comfort zone to explore more courses and try new things all the while progressively developing their skills.

### WHY NOW? WHY THIS?

The change addresses an issue facing all of higher education: Making core curriculum, graduation requirements and the overall college experience more relevant.

“This kind of core narrative is going to be very powerful in terms of preparing students

to go out and be responsible members of their communities who serve and contribute rather than crossing things off and saying, ‘Ok, now I can graduate because I checked all the boxes,’” Zaffiro explains.

“A narrative core is something Central has never done and isn’t exactly something many colleges do but our goal is to connect the college with the wider world.”

Students don’t usually look at a college because of their core curriculum but Central very well may be changing that.

“It’s about preparing students for the world they’re going to live in,” Zaffiro adds. “In an age when we have polarization, anger and violence, this is our way of articulating our mission for the next generation of college students. Now we have a core that reflects who we are and deliberately tries to accomplish our mission of preparing graduates for service in their communities.”

### A LOOK AHEAD

Over the course of the next four years, the new core will impact the entire student body and there’s a lot of excitement around it.

“Faculty are excited it’s here and happening,” Zaffiro says. “Many already feel that it’s better than what we had been doing for a lot of reasons. Some of the current students are even asking if they can switch their core to the new one and take these courses! To hear such interest is incredibly positive.”

Central has been a leader in higher education in many ways over the course of its 170-year history. Developing this Engaged Citizenship core curriculum is no different. Stay tuned for all the good this change will do for our communities and our world. ■



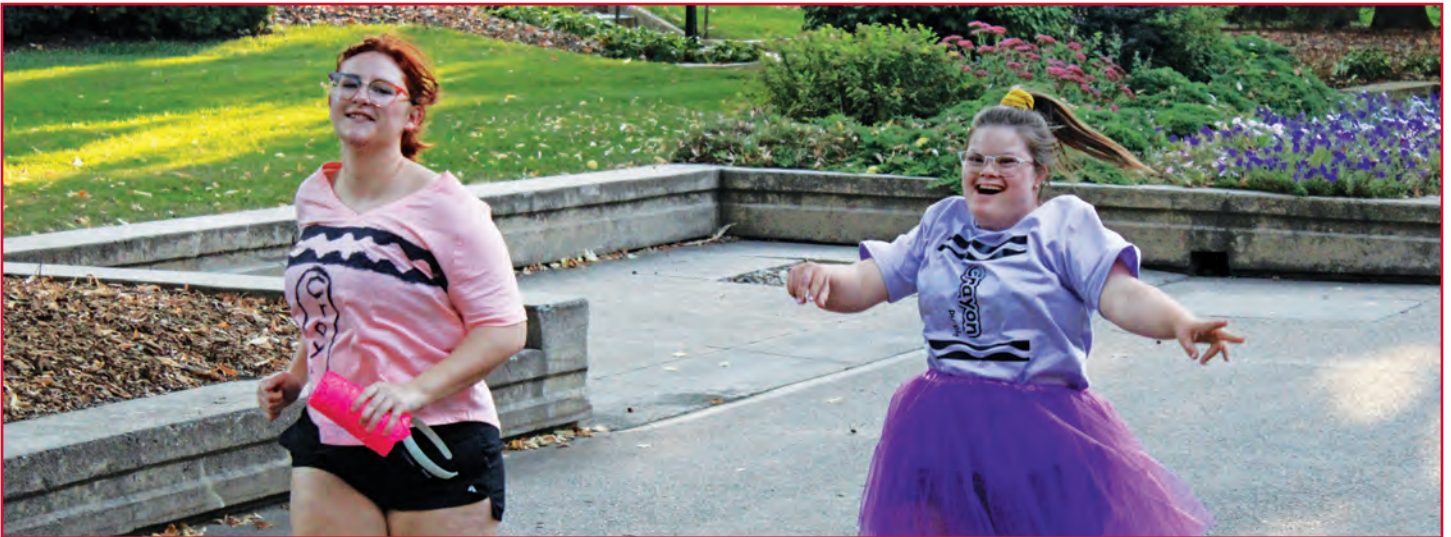


# 2023 HOMECOMING

View all reunion class photos at  
[central.edu/reunions-2023](https://central.edu/reunions-2023).











'63

Row 1: Marilyn Walraven Cummings and Larry Braskamp. Row 2: Sherry Lokhorst Wissink and Joyce Elzinga Kolenbrander. Row 3: Karen Bast Bartell and Gene Bartell. Row 4: Kay Kuyper De Cook, Jean Navis Tenpas and Ed Rathmell. Row 5: Jean Van Zomeren Argo, Janice Kooiker Gegenheimer and Nyla Rozeboom Heerema. Row 6: Lee Gegenheimer, Charles Argo, Don Dahm and Davis Eidahl.



'73

Row 1: Minnie Mallard, Don Frank, Beverly Greene Seeberger, Marlene Ten Braak Vande Berg, Nita Wade Martinez, Linda Midunsky Stienstra, Ava Maria Staler Lachiewica, Nancy Williams Stover, Kathy Tanke Fisch, Klaire Miller Jameson, Carolyn Veldheisen Wassenaar, Ruth Westra, Betty Thompson Adams, Jack Schlesseman, Bruce Scholtens and Bob Snyder. Row 2: Norm Northup, Professor Bob Maur, Harry Smith, Terry Beek, Karen De Yong Beek, Steve Paris, Gary Altman, Cindy Grootveld Loomans, Dan Martinez, Rick Hickman, Steve Klimstra, Bill Vermeer, Karen Gaas, Loren Zaruba, Milo Johnson, Wayne Stienstra and Gerald Piester. Row 3: Jerry Boelman, Howard Downs, Pat Hahn, Dana Snoap and Byron Loomans.



'78

Row 1: Diane Jaarsma Holm, Karen Bunn Stott, Kris Samuelson Van Wyk, Katie Creps Ghent, Sue Kasal Stinson and Connis Rhinehart Dayton. Row 2: Melinda Swanson Smithhart, Tim Johnson, Greg Bigbee and Vince Vandehaar.



'83

Row 1: Diane Mehlhaus Janvrin, Steve Sikkink and Penny Healy Sullivan.



'88

Row 1: Laura Smithhart Larkin, Kristi Jaarsma Balk, Amy Dietrich Eilers, Cathy Snyders Gray and John Sides. Row 2: Todd Bohlen, Sheila Pyle Sargent, Kellie Gorsche Markey, Susan Healy, Sheri Timmer Roslien and Daniel Glover.



'93

Row 1: Kevin Van Wyk, Stephanie Westra Van Wyk, Angie Hills Foss, Gini Thomas, Troy Brinkmeier, Angela Erickson Faber, Sheryl Johnston Barbour and Mary Jo Robinson Cook. Row 2: Amy Muller, Lisa McEwan, Jennifer Mumm, Niki Den Herder, Grant McMartin, Katie Gebben Jarvis and Jade Huebner Van Ert, Gary Knaack. Row 3: Dianne Ohrt Haywood, Connie Allison, Kimberly Mettler Kiffmeyer, Jen Lehman Schmah, Ed Maroon, Mary Kay Twohill Oberlin, Jennifer Hansen Vermeer and Mark Konrad.





Row 1: Chris Huston, John Chambers, Julie Vander Woude Worden, Aanna Hanson Hoch and Brandon Hoch.



Row 1: Jeremy Dittmer, Kristen Rohach Harris, Karen Broman and Jill Figgins Burns.



Row 1: Masse Carr Poetting, Jeremy Siefken, Amy Zellmer, Danielle Brillhart Steinkamp, Allison Fegley Johnson, Kiley Masters and Nichole Foxhoven. Row 2: David Trotter, Nathan Kroese, Melanie Revell Kroese, Lindee Russell Jeneary, Trevor Jones and Mindy Van Woerkom Jones.



Row 1: Megan Overton Bouska, Allison Jensen Arendt, Dani Aldridge Cole, Joanna Peters Tuttle and Allen Mann. Row 2: Bruce Behrens, Meghan Cain Newton, Stephanie Hasken Merritt, Alyssa Schwartz Furlong, Tessa Reinig Mann and Ashley Pedersen Blom. Row 3: Brandon Clough, Adam Ledvina, Jason Breon, Matt Kneib, Dirk Lindaman and Ben Lechtenberg.



Row 1: Joshua Johnson, Anna Shaw Heitkamp, Josh Prokupek and Cole Silver. Row 2: Jake Challen, Taylor Heitkamp and Regan Nelson Cairney.



Row 1: Bryce McCain, Cole Campbell, Evan Gray, Jacob Sharp and Austin Knaack.









**Wilma Damhof Hoekstra '45 and '69** was honored during Homecoming 2023 as the oldest known Central alumni. Hoekstra, who turned 100 in late October, is a lifelong educator. She wrote a book about monarch butterflies at age 98 to share her knowledge of the butterfly lifecycle with future generations. Hoekstra taught first grade for more than 20 years in Pella. She was married to the late **Anthony Hoekstra '61**. Between the couple, their children, spouses and grandchildren, Wilma is related to at least 22 Central alumni.



# NEWSNOTES

## THE '50s

**Leonard Kalkwarf '50** received the prestigious national honor of the “President’s Lifetime Award” at Greenspring’s Volunteer Service Awards ceremony. The award was in recognition of Kalkwarf’s 4,000 lifetime service hours.



▲ **Bev De Cook Brand '67** traveled to Haiti with her kids, **Steve Brand '96**, **Shelly Brand Nelson '98** and **Tim Brand '02**, to dedicate the newest Love-in-Action center in memory of their husband and father, **Denny Brand '65**.



▲ **Colleen Bennett Gawley '77** and **Terri Da Var '77** reconnected in May over Dutch letters from Pella’s Tulip Time in Gawley’s home of Holland, Michigan.

**Kristen Dieleman Gandrow '85** retired and now resides in Franklin, Tennessee.



▲ **Tracy Glawe '85** won first place in the 2022 International Weightlifting Federation World Masters Championship.

## THE '60s



▲ **Carol Scott Urmston '61**, along with her daughter, Heather, and grandsons, Dillon and Harris, traveled from New Hampshire to visit her alma mater.

**Carol Boerefyn Brickley '64** sang on tour with The Greeley Chorale in Spain and Portugal. Venues included the San Jerónimo Monastery in Granada, Spain, the Church of Saint Manuel and Saint Benedict in Madrid, Spain, and the Church of the Holy Angel in Seville, Spain.

**Doug Schakel '64** recorded his first-ever hole-in-one at age 81. Schakel was golfing at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in Olathe, Kansas, where he and his wife, **Sharon Kreun Schakel '67** reside.

## THE '70s



▲ When his number was pulled in a lottery for the Masters Tournament, **John Greico '71** asked Central buddies **Jim Coddington '71** and **Roger Stall '71** to join him. Not a fan of the game, Coddington’s goal for the trip was to get Greico to a Waffle House for the first time; unfortunately, he failed.

**Phyllis Steenhoek Palsma '74** retired after 45 years of ministry, 44 of which were as an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America. Palsma pastored churches in New York and New Jersey, was an RCA staff member in the Regional Synod of Albany and, most recently, director of pastoral care for Christian Health.



▲ *Left to Right:* **Tim Lantz '77**, **Jeanne Karstens '77**, **Jerry Dreyer '77**, **Jeri Lenz Papke '77**, **Chris Brown '77**, **Sue Ugucconi Hiatt '77**, **Gwen Barnes '77** and **Donald Edwards '77** gathered in Pella, Iowa, for a reunion. The group walked down memory lane on their visit to Central College, took a tour of the Vermeer Windmill and Pella Historical Museums led by **Gary Timmer '55** (pictured) and caught up. The friends came from as far away as California, North Carolina and Texas as well as Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota and Nebraska.

**Deborah Sonner Hubble '88** was named assistant superintendent of Katy Independent School District. She resides in Katy, Texas.

**Joe Jaspers '88** shot 7-under 209 for a stunning eight-stroke win in the National Senior Amateur Hall of Fame golf tournament in North Carolina.

## THE '90s

**Joe Sample '92** is a lecturer for graduate and undergraduate courses in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Iowa State University.

**Sean Cavanaugh '93** joined All Weigh Automation as their director of sales and marketing. Cavanaugh lives in Farmington, Minnesota.

**Jason Reynolds '93** retired as superintendent of Peoria Unified School District in Arizona, finishing a 30-year career in public education. He plans to enjoy some time with his wife and two children before seeking new opportunities to advocate for PK-20 education.

## THE '80s

**Doug McCaulley '83** retired from Deloitte after 34 years with the firm.

**Deanne De Vries '84** was awarded African Business Book of the Year 2023 by the Business Council of Africa.



## THE '90s (continued)

**Michael Frohling '94** is an assistant professor of lighting at Central Connecticut State University. Frohling resides in Southington, Connecticut.

**Nikki Danks Roorda '94** was named Johnston Community School District's interim superintendent.

**Terry Luschen '95** is the head football coach of Oak Grove Lutheran School in Fargo, North Dakota.

**Lori Heggen McDonald '95** was promoted to senior vice president of business execution with Wells Fargo. McDonald resides in Clive, Iowa.

**Jamie Montoya-De Smidt '96** is a mental health services coordinator for the Harrison School District No. 2 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**Elizabeth Brown Hardeman '99** is a pastor at Second Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa.



▲ **Mark Woodley '99, Rachael Hurley Woodley '98, Karin Dallmeyer Wilson '99** and Ray Wilson ran into each other on the Amalfi Coast. Mark and Karin studied together in Wales.

## THE '00s

**Brian Lillis '01** was promoted to marketing director for Hormel Foods. Lillis resides in Austin, Minnesota.

**Josh Manning '03** was named principal at Pella High School in Pella, Iowa.

**Randall Jarzombek '04** was awarded the Red Rock Area Top 10 Under 40 for 2022. Jarzombek is the owner of Randall Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Abby Steffensen Kessler '04** is a product owner at CDS Global.

**Jenny Meyers Hesseltine '06** is the foundation coordinator for the Pella Regional Health Center's Foundation in Pella, Iowa, where she resides.

**Jennie Claussen Koenig '07** was awarded the Red Rock Area Top 10 Under 40 for 2022. Koenig is the co-founder of the Pleasantville Youth Initiative and social media director at Celebrate Church.

**Megan Hansen Dewhurst '08** is a South Hardin Middle School science teacher in Hubbard, Iowa.

**Ramy Mosbah '09** is the senior strategic account executive for Twilio.

## THE '10s

**Cory Hall '10** is a strategic customer success manager at Cornerstone OnDemand.

**Justin Madsen '10** was named among the 2023 Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Advisors. Madsen resides in Pella, Iowa.

**Jake Eeling '12** is an environmental specialist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and resides in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Stephanie Heiken '12** was promoted to team leader and senior analyst in the Homeland Security & Justice team at the U.S. Government Accountability Office.



▲ **Jacob Safford and Danielle Vesneske Safford '12** married Nov. 11, 2022, in Richland, Washington.

**Rhiley Huntington Binns '13** works as a development specialist for the Great Outdoors Foundation. Binns resides in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Greg Ellingson '13** is director of capital markets at LCS in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Beckie Kubiacyk May '13** teaches fourth grade at North St. Francis County School District.

**Drew Readel '13** is working at The Ohio University as a senior regional recruiting manager. Readel resides in Chicago, Illinois.

**Jason Karstens '14** is an assistant professor at A.T. Still University of Health Sciences in Mesa, Arizona.



▲ Central College faculty, alumni and students were well-represented at the North American Prairie Conference held in Altoona, Iowa. **Russ Benedict**, professor of biology, presented on the multi-year research he conducted alongside students entitled, "Preference of Plants as Nectar Sources by Adult Monarch Butterflies in a Tallgrass Prairie Reconstruction."

*First Row:* **Ashli Harn '26, Kayla Lindquist '25, Madi Whalen '25 and Coleman Manuel '25.**

*Second Row:* **Ryan McPherren '14, Allison Drees McPherren '12, Derek Miner '15, Kody Wohlers '05, Ashley Oblander '16, Russ Benedict, Jessica Riebkes Clough '14, Brandon Clough '13, Amy Andrews '15, Melanie Louis Schmidt '12 and Ryan Schmidt '12.**

**Grant Seufferer '14** is a senior manager at Deloitte.

**Cody Gullett '15** is operations director for Target.

# NEWSNOTES

## THE '10s (continued)

**Mike Mackin '15** works for ITA group as a supervisor of digital experience manager. Mike lives in Bondurant, Iowa.

Alex and **Kenzie Vander Molen Branderhorst '15** married May 20, 2023. The couple resides in Knoxville, Iowa.

**Jill Huffman Russell '16** is a project administrator at Hopkins Roofing in Pella, Iowa, where she resides.

Leah and **Jake Wassenaar '16** married Nov. 5, 2023.

**Trevor Schweinefus '17** works for Shindler, Anderson, Goplerud & Weese P.C. as an associate attorney.



▲ **Zachary Steward '17** was crowned Miss Gay Capital City Iowa USofA and placed in the top six for the Miss Gay Iowa USofA pageant.

**Regan Nelson Cairney '18** is a registered nurse in the cardiac surgery unit for Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa.



▲ **Brooke Jansen '18** is a communications specialist for Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa. Jansen resides in Sully, Iowa, with her husband, Harrison, and two children, Elias and Grace.

**Cole Silver '18** is a production manager at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Adam Carey '19** was named Central College's head baseball coach. Carey resides in Pella, Iowa.

**Gretchen Mann Clapper '19** works as a children's ministry director for Harvest E-Free Church. Clapper lives in Story City, Iowa.

**Olivia Denham '19** completed her first season coaching girls soccer at Bondurant-Farrar High School and received the Raccoon River Conference 2023 Girls Soccer Coach of the Year award.

Noah and **Hannah Scotton Stephas '19** married June 17, 2023.

## THE '20s

**Anne Williamson Dillon '20** is an audit and assurance in-charge at Deloitte and resides in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Tori Fyfe '20** was awarded the Red Rock Area Top 10 Under 40 for 2022.

**Dustin '23** and **Stacy Mohr Haines '20** married June 10, 2023.

**Grace Vaughn Kratochvil '20** was promoted to strategic development manager at Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas. She lives in Galveston, Texas, with her husband, **Evan Kratochvil '20**, who is pursuing his doctorate in occupational therapy.

**Duncan Lee '20** participated in the USA National Wrestling Tournament held in Las Vegas, Nevada.



▲ **Christian '20** and **Lexie Patton Messick '20**, married April 29, 2023.

**Bryant Seufferer '20** is the director of the adult ministry and mission at First Church in Pella, Iowa.

**Collin Lefeber '21** is an athletic trainer for Wayne State College. Lefeber lives in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Joe '21** and **Erica Van Wyk Pepe '23** married June 17, 2023.

**Raquel Smith '21** is a sales analyst at Ornua Foods North America in Chicago, Illinois.

**Cooper Vittetoe '21** is an academic advisor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Vittetoe resides in McFarland, Wisconsin.

**Brad DiLeo '22** is a tennis professional at the Hawkeye Tennis and Recreation Complex in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Zach Goering '22** is a recruiting manager for Cemen Tech, Inc.

**Tim Stammeyer '22** published his first theatrical play entitled, "Switchermoo!" through Pioneer Drama Service.

Emily and **Blake Recker '24** married June 10, 2023.

## ADVANCED DEGREE

**Brian Lillis '01** graduated from the University of Iowa with a Master of Business Administration.

**Tricia Schoon '05** earned a Master of Special Education with a diagnostician certification from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

**Mike Mackin '15** earned his MBA from the University of Iowa in May 2023.

**Megan Querry '15** completed her second master's degree through Texas A&M International University. Her degree is in criminal justice.



## ADVANCED DEGREE (continued)

**Jessica Merrill '18** completed her doctorate in occupational therapy at Drake University.

**Jenny Rankin Morrett '18** received a master's in art education from the University of Northern Iowa in 2023.

**Sydney Peterson '20** earned a doctorate in occupational therapy from Creighton University in May 2023.

**Collin Lefeber '21** completed his sports medicine degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 2023.

**Tristan Murphy '21** earned a Master of Science in biology from the University of Northern Iowa in May 2023.

**Kinsley Parrott '21** completed a master's degree in child life from the University of Iowa in May 2023.

**Karleigh Schilling '21** completed her master's degree in economics from Baylor University in May 2023.

## NEW ARRIVALS

Neha and **Matthew Michalak '05**, daughter Sahana Ina, May 16, 2023.

Boone Buckley and **Rachel Wallace '06**, son Augustus Brooks, Nov. 1, 2022.

Lance and **Elizabeth Davis VeDepo '08**, son Tate Matthew, April 6, 2023.

**Jason '10** and **Taylor Wessels Hassman '13**, son Graham Randall, Oct. 12, 2022.

**Robert '12** and **Morgan Gray Kreiser '14**, son Harrison Gray, June 12, 2023.

Landon and **Stephanie Brammer Medvec '12**, daughter Andie Monroe, March 27, 2023.

Carr and **Emma Putnam Fearrington '13**, daughter Cece Rae, June 11, 2023.

Kathryn and **Ian Michel '13**, daughter Elsie Leona, April 20, 2023.

**Collin '13** and **Emily Arrendell Robinson '16**, son Bram Charles, June 20, 2023.

**Cameron '14** and **Laura Draheim Macdonald '15**, son Mason Waite, April 19, 2023.

Betsy and **Tim Wilson '14**, daughter Joy Catherine, June 26, 2023.

Nathan and **Hillary Hotz Greteman '15**, daughter Evelyn Adelaide, March 29, 2023.

**Jakob '15** and **Alicia Huegel Steenhoek '15**, son Theodore Daniel, June 18, 2023.

**Joe '16** and **Jenny Rankin Morrett '18**, son Cooper Jeffrey, April 4, 2023.

Clint and **Alexis Oldham Jochems '18**, daughter Evelyn Jane, June 21, 2023.

**Josh '18** and **Mackenzie Fuller Johnson '19**, daughter Vivienne Mary, May 20, 2023.

Jonny and **Regan Engleman Reel '18**, daughter Ava Marie, June 12, 2023.

**Cal '18** and **Olivia Buseman Smith '20**, son Emmett Samuel, April 14, 2023.

Haley and **Tyler Bryant '19**, daughter Alison Anne, March 20, 2023.

Julian and **Madi Ulrich Capaci '21**, son Anthony John, March 30, 2023.

**Hayden '22** and **Mari Stein Vroom '22**, daughter Isla Mae, June 16, 2023.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Richard Vandermyde '51**, Morrison, Illinois, April 1, 2023.

**Artie Van Wyk Van Zee '52**, Pella, Iowa, May 8, 2023.

**Gertrude Steenhoek Van Zee '52**, Pella, Iowa, March 1, 2023.

**Helen Schaafsma Luckinbill '54**, San Jacinto, California, March 2023.

**Bob Vander Linden '55**, Pella, Iowa, July 20, 2023.

**Doris Schmidt De Hoogh '56**, Orange City, Iowa, April 15, 2023.

**Mae Rankin Mathes '57**, Russell, Iowa, May 13, 2023.

**Paul Hynick '60**, Albia, Iowa, June 13, 2023.

**Mark Furlane '71**, Baltimore, Maryland, April 27, 2023.

**Jean Hamilton Vahle '74**, Franklin, North Carolina, April 18, 2023.

**Kenneth Wasulko '75**, Mishawaka, Indiana, June 17, 2023.

**James Ryan '75**, Shirley, Arkansas, May 28, 2023.

**Julie Walvoord Cohen '77**, Milford, Michigan, May 10, 2023.

**Diane Babcock '89**, Newton, Iowa, May 6, 2023.

**Carol Beyer**, former food service staff member, Pella, Iowa, May 19, 2023.

**Edward Hoksbergen**, former facilities staff member, Pella, Iowa, April 29, 2023.

**Janice Vander Wert**, former food service staff member, Pella, Iowa, June 15, 2023.

**Alice Ver Meer**, former career services secretary, Pella, Iowa, April 26, 2023.

## MEMORIAL GIFTS AT CENTRAL

Some alumni and friends inquire about making a memorial gift in honor of a special member of the Central family. If you would like to do so, please call 641-628-5154 and ask for **Michelle Wilkie**, director of development or give online at [central.edu/give](http://central.edu/give) and add a note to designate your memorial.



## NEWSNOTES

### IN MEMORIAM (continued)

#### IN MEMORIAM



### JACK WALVOORD '54

Longtime Central College Men's Basketball Head Coach, **Jack Walvoord '54**, passed away in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, June 23, 2023. He was surrounded by family members, including his youngest daughter, **Jane Walvoord Newman '80**. He was 92.

Walvoord journeyed to Central from Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, in 1950. He was a four-year letterwinner as Central's point guard, served as a team captain and returned 12 years after graduating as the men's head basketball coach — becoming the longest-tenured and winningest men's basketball coach in school history.

Walvoord succeeded his college coach, **Marinus Kregel**, at Central in 1966. He posted a 380-315 record over 29 seasons, the third-longest tenure of any Dutch head coach in any sport. His teams captured 10 Iowa Conference titles, including nine in his final 19 seasons, along with eight NCAA Division III tournament berths. He had a combined high school/college record of 505-375. He was also Central's baseball coach from 1966-67 and men's cross country coach from 1966-73.

Walvoord was inducted into Central's Athletics Hall of Honor in 2012.

## NEWSNOTES

## 2023: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**Naomi Adams** is a lab technician with Eurofins in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Tom Adolph** is a mechanical design engineer at Winnebago Industries located in Forest City, Iowa.

**J.D. Alberhasky** is a store manager intern at John's Grocery in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Austin Andresen** is pursuing a Doctor of Chiropractic at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.

**Joseph Areyano** is a counseling assistant at the Selma Unified School District in Selma, California.

**Emily Atkinson** works at ChildServe in Johnston, Iowa, as a behavior technician of applied behavior analysis.

**Alicia Auberg** is a special education teacher for Hedding Grade School located in Abingdon, Illinois.

**Marie Bakken** is a visitor services assistant manager at The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums in Platteville, Wisconsin.

**Theo Baldus** is a high school physical education teacher for BCLUW Community School District in Conrad, Iowa.

**Brandon Banyas** is a business unit financial analyst at Great-America Financial Services in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Trong Bao** is an associate technical analyst at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Sam Beatty** is an environmental assistant scientist at Terracon in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Annah Bender** works for United States Fish and Wildlife Services as a biological technician in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

**Jordan Bendorf** is working for the San Diego Padres as a marketing administrator in San Diego, California.

**Lindsey Blommers** is an auditor for UHY LLP in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Andrea Bogaard** is a wardrobe dresser at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio.

**Sharaden Boggs** is studying nursing at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jonathan Bossou** is working for Whirlpool Corporation in Columbus, Ohio, as a global supply chain manager.

**Lilly Bracy** is working for The Well in Knoxville, Iowa, as a care coordinator.

**Ashlynn Brant** is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy at Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa.

**Zoe Brockway** is a high school math teacher in the Pleasantville School District in Pleasantville, Iowa.

**Lexi Buls** is a sixth-grade math teacher for Kearney School District in Kearney, Missouri.

**Paige Busick** is attending the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, to obtain her master's in school psychology.

**Kaylin Carel** is a GIS analyst for Duke Energy in St. Petersburg, Florida.



**Jessica Carithers** teaches fourth grade for Seminole County Public Schools in Altamonte Springs, Florida.

**Rebekah Cashen** is a Spanish teacher at Pella Christian High School in Pella, Iowa.

**Jonathan Chase** is a buyer for Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Madison Clark** is an associate business analyst at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Bryce Clinkenbeard** is pursuing a doctorate in physics at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado.

**Cali Coffman** is attending the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa, for a master's in athletics.

**Drew Coffman** is a staff accountant for Van Maanen, Sietstra, Meyer & Nikkel, PC in Pella, Iowa.

**Andrew Collins** is working as a vet tech at Pella Pets in Pella, Iowa.

**Evan Collins** is a marketing intern at Many Hands for Haiti in Pella, Iowa.

**Caleb Comstock** is a design engineer at Ring-O-Matic in Pella, Iowa.

**Lauren Coon** works at Community Bank & Trust as account executive 1 in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

**Jahi Craig** is a group fitness instructor at Evolution Fitness in Johnston, Iowa.

**Benjamin Crist** is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Rachel Daniels** is pursuing a doctorate in dentistry.

**Alexis De Vries** is a high school English teacher at North Mahaska Schools in New Sharon, Iowa.

**Quinn Deahl** is attending the University of Iowa College of Law in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Audrey DeBie** is working at Corteva Agriscience as a research assistant in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Matthew Den Adel** is an actuarial analyst for Farm Bureau Financial Services in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Ian Den Herder** is attending Pima Medical Institute in Tucson, Arizona, for a nursing degree.

**Douglas Dobbs** is pursuing a doctorate at Rocky Mountain University of Health in Provo, Utah.

**Manwuel Dunkel** is an internal auditor for Athene in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Erika Eaton** works for Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Brayden Egli** works for Vander Linden Services where he resides in Pella, Iowa.

**Anika Faro** is pursuing a master's degree in library and information science from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Champaign, Illinois.

**Madison Farrington** is in a master's program at University of Dubuque in Dubuque, Iowa.

**Leticia Francisco Pascual** is a judicial specialist II for the Iowa Judicial Branch in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Nolan Freymark** is a design engineer for Weiler in Knoxville, Iowa.

**Billy Friis** is a sales support coordinator for LDJ Manufacturing in Pella, Iowa.

**Autumn Fye** teaches kindergarten in the Prairie City Monroe Community School District in Monroe, Iowa.

**Kyle Gabos** is a junior assistant at Three Rivers Parks District in Medina, Minnesota.

**Trevor Glockel** is a cost accountant for Airlite Plastics in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Evan Gray** is a project engineer at Musco Sports Lighting, LLC in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**Dustin Haines** is a middle school PE and health teacher at Pella Community Schools in Pella, Iowa.

**Makenna Hall** is attending the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, to obtain a master's in school counseling.

**Caleb Hamerlinck** is a staff accountant for Century 23 Signature in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Peyton Hammerich** is a caregiver at Faith and Family Care in Pella, Iowa.

**Angela Harestad** is a judicial specialist for the Iowa Judicial Branch in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Lucas Heitz** is a mechanical designer for IMEG in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Jeffrey Herbers** is an actuarial assistant at Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Hailey Hill** works for Orchestrate Hospitality as an assistant manager in Pella, Iowa.

**Dillon Hoit** is an assistant auditor for the State of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Madeline Holle** is attending the University of Iowa for a doctorate in analytical chemistry.

**Bria Holthe** is a grants coordinator at Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Sheila Horstmann** is a veterinary assistant at the Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jaida Houge** is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy from Allen College in Waterloo, Iowa.

**Sydni Huisman** is interning with Nationwide Financial in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Elizabeth Hurlbut** is studying athletic training at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Kelsea Hurley** is studying criminology and criminal justice at Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Nicholas Johnson** is a sales representative at Home Solutions of Iowa in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



**Malory Jones** is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy at Des Moines University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Gabi Kimm** is working toward a master's in social work at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois.

**Alyssa Knuth** is pursuing a doctorate in chiropractic from the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.

**Samantha Kosman** is a preschool and early childhood special education teacher for Prairie City Monroe Community School District in Prairie City, Iowa.

**Cole Kraber** is a carrier coordinator for Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**MacKenzie Kruse** is working toward a master's in exercise physiology at Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minnesota.

**Madison McMartin Kuester** is a membership and fitness director at the YMCA in Grundy Center, Iowa. She and Travis Kuester married April 15, 2023.

**Caleb Kuiper** is a facilities and grounds coordinator at Lake View Camp in Pella, Iowa.

**Elise Visscher Kuiper** is working for Lake View Camp in Pella, Iowa.

**Noah Leonard** is pursuing a master's in athletic training at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Drake Lewis** is a coach at Anytime Fitness in Greeley, Colorado.

**Sarah Lindeman** is a content coordinator for Bankers Trust in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Thea Lunning** is attending optometry school at Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee.

**Ashley Lupkes** is a marketing project manager for the Iowa Association of Realtors in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Colin MacGregor** is an audit associate in Des Moines, Iowa, for FORVIS, LLP.

**Abigail Marr** teaches sixth grade at Osage Public Schools in Osage, Iowa.

**Charles Martin** is an audit associate for RSM US LLP in Chicago, Illinois.

**Bryce McCain** is an associate account manager for Lockton in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Kylee McDonald** is continuing her education at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Katelyn McGee** is a seamstress and sales consultant for Perry Bridal in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Trey Melvin** is a financial analyst for EquipmentShare in Columbia, Missouri.

**Allison Miller** works for Homemakers Furniture in Urbandale, Iowa, as a social media coordinator.

**Metsje Miller** is an admission representative for Central College in Pella, Iowa.

**Natalia Mindowicz** is attending George Washington University for a master's in forensic psychology in Washington, D.C.

**Ryne Mohrfeld** is pursuing a master's in athletic training at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Gloria Montiel** is a talent acquisition specialist at Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Courtney Mouw** is a java software developer at Advanced Technologies Group in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Brenden Mudd** is an IT help desk intern at Mary Greely Medical Center in Ames, Iowa.

**Megan Muur** is a marketing specialist at Home Solutions of Iowa in Waukee, Iowa.

**Trey Nelson** is a manager trainee at Enterprise Holdings in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Muhumure Nzabakiza** is studying immigration law at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Stiven Parmley** is a nursing student at Allen College in Waterloo, Iowa.

**Sara Pauley** is attending UMKC School of Law in Kansas City, Missouri, to study family law.

**Renee Pedersen** works in sales at Homemakers Furniture in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Rachel Pella** is pursuing a doctorate degree at Rockhurst University in Kansas, Lawrence, Missouri.

**Erica Van Wyk Pepe** is a personal banker at Bank Iowa in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**Stevette Perez** is studying nursing at Mercy College in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Tyler Peterson** is studying kinesiology at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

**Kaila Plum** is training to be a counselor at Keys to Success in Pella, Iowa.

**Kayla Tatz Poffenberger** is working toward a master's in dietetics from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. She and Will Poffenberger married June 3, 2023.

**Micah Poole** is pursuing a doctorate in occupational therapy at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa.

**Kate Pachner Poss** married Derrick Poss June 3, 2023.

**Nathan Rahn** is farming in Chadwick, Illinois.

**Braedynn Rawlins** is a nursing student at Mercy College in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Kaden Rhinehart** is a personal trainer and strength coach at Performance Health & Fitness in Coralville, Iowa.

**Makenna Rhodes** is an intern at Trees Forever in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Taylor Richards** is a preschool teacher in the Pleasantville Community School District in Pleasantville, Iowa.

**Greg Ricketts** is pursuing a master's in sports management and policy at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia.

**Misty Rivas** is an elementary school teacher for the Humble School District in Humble, Texas.

**Ashley Robbins** is a software engineer at Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Ryan Roberts** is a middle school student advocate for the Prairie City Monroe Community School District in Prairie City, Iowa.

**Keaton Rodgers** works for the USDA Agricultural Research Services in Sidney, Montana.

**Julia Rodriguez** is an associate security administrator at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Ajani Rodriguez** works for the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, Florida.

**Aaron Roelfs** is attending Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana.

**Skyler Sadler** is a cost accountant at Hopkins Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Richard Sanchez** is a substitute teacher at the Lincoln Public Schools in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Katy Sawyer** is a family support specialist at Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic as a family in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Morgan Schaben** is a reinsurance analyst at Farmers Mutual Hail Insurance Company of Iowa in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Gabby Brown Schulte** teaches first grade in the Pella Community School District in Pella, Iowa.

**Cassandra Severson** is a naturalist intern for Marion County in Knoxville, Iowa.

**Jacob Sharp** is studying nursing at Mercy College in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Brendan Short** is a software engineer at State Farm in Bloomington, Illinois.

**Amanda Smith** is a second-grade teacher for the Pella Community School District in Pella, Iowa.

**Audrey Smith** is pursuing a doctorate in veterinary medicine at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Hayden Smith** is a personal trainer at the Colorado Institute of Sports Medicine in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**Evan Squires** teaches third grade in Newton, Iowa, for the Newton Community School District.

**Sam Staley** works at Weiler in Knoxville, Iowa, as an electrical design engineer.

**Cooper Stigsell** is a self-employed painting contractor in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Hailey Swan** is an admission representative at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

**Annie Swaters** is pursuing a master's in sports exercise at the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

**Hallie Taets** is a teaching associate for the Pella Community School District in Pella, Iowa.

**Kennedy Tate** is a staff accountant at Williams & Company P.C. in Spencer, Iowa.

**Grace Teig** is an art teacher for the North Cedar School District in Clarence, Iowa.

**Kade Terrell** is a PE and health teacher for the Pella Community School District in Pella, Iowa.

**Ryan Thomas** is a management trainee at Enterprise Holdings in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Ian Thomson** teaches high school science in the Newton Community School District in Newton, Iowa.

**TiAhanna Bryant Thomson** is a K-fourth-grade teacher at Emerson Hough Elementary in Newton, Iowa. She and **Ian Thomson** married June 24, 2023.

**Zachary Townsend** is a production associate for Magna International in Montezuma, Iowa.

**Michael Turnley** is a social studies teacher at Pella Christian High School in Pella, Iowa.

**Delaney Underwood** is pursuing a master's in biostatistics at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

**Mason Vanatta** is a tax associate at Eide Bailly LLP in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Martin Vineyard** works for Hormel Foods Corporation as a general accounting associate in Austin, Minnesota.

**Kurby Vowels** is a ticket sales associate for the St. Louis Cardinals in St. Louis, Missouri.

**Emma Ware** is the AmeriCorps civic action plan coordinator for community-based learning at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

**Victoria Warren** is studying law at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi.

**Lucas Wendel** is studying health informatics at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Matthew West** is working toward a master's in athletics at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

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# PERKINS PAY IT FORWARD

STORY BY: BRITTANY CARLSON PROKUPEK '16 PHOTO BY: CJ BONIFER



Central is where **Steve '01** and **Stefanie Bresnahan Perkins '02** discovered who they wanted to be – generous and caring parents. They chose to establish a scholarship in honor of their son, Jackson, who has autism.

When an old friend contacts you out of the blue offering to buy some of your land, your first instinct is to give some of that money away, right? That was the first thought for **Steve '01** and **Stefanie Bresnahan Perkins '02** when it happened to them.

And so began the hard part: Coming to a decision. After praying and discussing the nonprofit organizations and options near to their hearts, the couple decided to create an endowed fund at Central College. Sure, it may come as no surprise to many as the Perkins have always been loyal donors, active alumni and great ambassadors of Central. But the reason behind it all came from a very personal, loving place.

After being diagnosed with autism at an early age, the couple knew their eldest son, Jackson, likely wouldn't be able to attend college. Steve and Stef established a scholarship in his name so Jackson's legacy would live at Central forever.

"Central is where we became who we are; it's where we met and where our life began," Stef shares. "We want to honor that."

Given the number of educators who have made a difference in their son's life and educational experience, Stef's work and involvement in the Allamakee Community School District in their home of Waukon, Iowa, and all the great teachers they've seen come from Central, the Jackson Perkins Education Scholarship was born. This award supports Central students seeking a special education endorsement.

As scholarship recipients themselves, the couple strongly believes in paying it forward and giving back for the experiences they had as well as the generosity they received in their time at Central.

"One hundred percent of alumni graduated from Central because we were supported by people," Steve says. "If we want Central to be around for future generations, we need to give back and be part of the solution."

The Perkins hope this scholarship will ease some of the financial burden of higher education, inspire others to do good and create better teachers for students like Jackson.

"Giving back is life-changing for the next generation," Steve shares. "We give because we want to make people's lives better."

"You don't have to be able to give a large amount of money to support Central because it all adds up; any amount helps someone go to college," Stef adds.

Jackson has enrolled in Central READY, a program designed for students with neurodiverse diagnoses to experience college life and culture. Students gain job experience and learn skills for independent living while on Central's campus.

**Every gift matters and directly impacts the lives of Central students. To learn more about giving back to Central, visit [central.edu/give](https://central.edu/give) or contact Michelle Wilkie, director of development, at [wilkiem@central.edu](mailto:wilkiem@central.edu).**

**Watch the video about the family's journey to establishing the Jackson Perkins Education Scholarship at: [central.edu/perkins-scholarship](https://central.edu/perkins-scholarship). ■**

# LOOKING BEYOND

STORY BY: HAILEY HUNTER '24



On the field and in the classroom, **Hailey Hunter '24** fully commits to getting the most out of her time at Central.

My time at Central College has been full of endless opportunities, new experiences and personal growth. Choosing Central was easy and is one of the best decisions I have ever made. It's a community like no other, and to put it simply, I love it here.

When you first get to college, you're trying to figure yourself out. Now in my final year here, it's fun to look back on how much I've changed and far I've come.

Being a student-athlete is an experience in itself, but when I began looking beyond just going to class and playing soccer, that's

when my dreams became bigger and my passions grew stronger.

Coming to college, I knew that I wanted to be involved, but I didn't know where I wanted to start. I found that everything I was passionate about and wanted to do in my four years at Central was rooted in people. My blossoming friendships, the connections I was making with faculty and staff and the everyday interactions I had on campus are at the heart of where my journey truly began.

I allowed the academic and athletic sides of my life to branch out during my second year at Central. I declared a major in communication studies, became a Student Orientation Staff Leader, a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council and a student employee. Connection and relationships became my drive in an effort to make campus a place people love as much as I do.

I grew in confidence and leadership as I got to know so many different people and pieces of what make Central, Central. All of it led me to my work study position in the Communications Office where I've been able to do exactly what I'm passionate about. I get to hear and tell the stories of Central and then I get to share my own experiences from behind the scenes (just like now).

You can do so much in this small town, and you can travel far from it and still experience what it means to be at Central and a member of the Central family.

One of my most memorable experiences was the women's soccer trip to Europe. Playing soccer and experiencing entirely different cultures in the Netherlands and Germany, wearing red and white and the Central "C," was surreal and an honor I will never forget.

Central offers so many incredible opportunities to travel abroad that I think are so important. It just goes to show no matter how far you wander from Pella, you always have that tie back to your home away from home.

I'll be sharing all of the good about Central for a very long time — reminiscing on the last years of my soccer career, the memories I made with my best friends, the work I did, the people I knew and the best four years of my life. I credit younger me (as well as everyone who has impacted my time at Central) with all that I've gotten to experience. I was looking for more when I looked beyond the classroom and soccer field and was amazed by all I found.

A piece of my heart will always be at Central. And I know that sense of pride, my love for this place and community and my experiences will always draw me back home. ■





**Front Row:** Tami White, Bo White '93, Mac Payne '27, Abigail Kiple Leonard '94, Laura Peter Patterson '05, Kael Patterson '27, Kent Patterson '05, Payton Chambers and Summer Chambers '27. **Second Row:** Alister White '27, Ajay Six '27, Abigail Erickson '27, Tara Olsen Deist '98, Kathy Cashen Thompson '87, Cashen Thompson '27, John Chambers '98 and Kristin Chambers. **Third Row:** April Shirkey Six '96, Aden Six '27, Addison Six '24, Alivia Roerdink '27, Aaron Roerdink '97, Piper Eighmy '27 and Veronica Myers Eighmy '00. **Fourth Row:** Avery Six '27, Aaron Six '97, Elizabeth Brown Hardeman '99, Neriah Hardeman '27, Lincoln Eighmy '27 and Brandon Eighmy '01.